federal register

Friday
April 24, 1981

Part IV

Department of the Interior

Fish and Wildlife Service

Permit Processing Delays; Special Services; Discontinuance

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Permit Processing Delays; Special Services; Discontinuance

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Service notifies all permit applicants, permittees and permit information seekers that responses to their requests for services or information and processing of permits by the Federal Wildlife Permit Office will take longer and that some services may be discontinued or denied for a temporary time.

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 22, 1981.

BACKGROUND: The Federal Wildlife Permit Office (WPO), was established on July 1, 1976. One of its major responsibilities was the processing of some 26 types of permits or certificates provided for under several Acts of Congress, Treaties or International Conventions. One goal was to reduce permit processing time, which had been taking some 90–120 days for about 600 permits processed each year. By 1979 though the permit load had increased to over 2,000 per year, but an adequate staff had reduced processing time to 30 to 80 days in addition to providing numerous other services. Various informational Fact Sheets, lists of permit holders engaged in similar activities such as Captive-bred Wildlife or Alligator Commercial activities were compiled for the convenience of the permit holders and Permit Workshops were held throughout the country to inform the general public as well as governmental agencies of various permit requirements and of the services newly available from WPO in the general area of federal wildlife permits. In Fiscal Year 1980 some 2,300 permit actions were processed within the same time frame and various services provided. Some of these services include telephone responses to applicants requesting to know the processing status of their applications, permit requirements for certain activities or simply general information. Another service is giving special handling to a party's application in order to take advantage of an unforeseen scientific or commercial opportunity on very short notice. Specials are extremely disruptive to WPO and inefficient as to unit time costs. Statistics for early 1981 indicate a continuing increase in the workload and about 3,000 permit actions are expected during the calendar year. Temporary staff reductions make it impossible for WPO to continue to provide all these services and to maintain short processing times. In an effort to keep processing time as short as possible and in addition to various administrative streamlining by WPO, certain public services may be temporarily reduced or eliminated.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Permit applicants and other parties dealing with WPO are notified that until further notice: 1. processing time for applications for permits or requests for amendments to permits may require more time than has previously been the case; 2. applications will be processed strictly in the order received; 3. telephone requests for processing status will be handled only as possible within the limits of staff time, and may not be answered at all; 4. lists of permittees engaged in similar activities will be discontinued. The Service will make every effort to improve this situation, as soon as possible. Until that time, we ask the public tc bear with us.

ADDRESS: Comments should be sent to the Director, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Federal Wildlife Permit Office, P.O. Box 3654, Arlington, Virginia 22203.

Dated: April 15, 1981.

Harold J. O'Connor,

Acting Director.

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